



The Human Touch

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TOGETHER WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE



Manager of Year Tess Blackmer surrounded by, from left, Robin Arnold-Williams, Richard Anderson & Paul Curtis.

From Robin's Pen **Tess Does A Great Job**

Tess Blackmer was stunned when I told her colleagues in Provo that she was the Human Services Department's manager of the year. No one else was the least bit surprised. Her entire Western Region team nominated Tess, who has worked for the Division of Child and Family Services since 1995.

I'm reminded of how many excellent and dedicated managers we have at Human Services each year as I travel around to announce the award winners. We only give certificates to the winner and two finalists. Each one is a fine example of the type of management exemplified by DHS employees.

Other finalists this year are Mary Lou Emerson, Substance Abuse Deputy Director, and Glenn Barrow from Recovery Services.

Tess promotes team development and created an environment of trust within her team and with community partners that is helping DCFS do business in a new way. We call the system the Practice Model Principles, but what

it really means is staff and community partners work together to respond to children's needs. Tess also has been involved at the state level in helping to develop procedures that directly impact families we serve and those with whom she works. Tess uses her communication skills to mediate conflicts and convey ideas that have been instrumental in solving problems and making decisions to improve service delivery.

Tess really cares about her workers and she cares about our clients. She shows constant concern for their needs and genuinely wants them to succeed and become self-sufficient. Her focus is always on helping the family succeed.

Mary Lou has changed the whole climate at Substance Abuse since becoming assistant director. She increased communication and cooperation so that the division can carry out its mission more effectively. She really shines at giving positive feedback and consciously acts in ways that help staff members succeed and improve the quality of their work.

Mary Lou's long and varied experiences in the field of substance abuse make her an invaluable resource to staff. Her common sense, sound judgment and decision-making have helped set the tone at Substance Abuse. She takes problems on directly and in a timely manner so they can be resolved and don't linger to do more damage. Mary Lou also is the epitome of customer service. Overall, she is an outstanding supervisor, assistant director and person, and DHS is fortunate to have her.

Glenn runs a child support team for the Office of Recovery Services. He epitomizes the definition of a sound, solid and positive leader. He is a good follower who supports his superiors in principle and fact. He's also a team

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Helping Indian Children Maintain Their Identity

By Carol Sisco

DHS Public Information

Imagine being taken away from your parents and not understanding why. That's hard enough but think about suddenly being exposed to a new language, culture and traditions.

Native American children regularly dealt with those issues for many years. In the early years they were sent to boarding schools to learn the "white man's ways or to take the Indian out of them," said Savania Tsosie, Indian Child Welfare Act specialist in the Division of Child and Family Services. The same thing often happened if children were abused and placed in foster care.

"It took away the child's identity because your identity is made up of your family, culture and traditions," she said.

The federal Indian Child Welfare Act, approved in 1978, was designed to help children maintain ties with their family, culture and traditions. Tsosie's job involves working with DCFS workers to make sure they understand the act and how to comply with it.

"The Indian community is very happy the state opened this position," Tsosie said. "As I meet with tribal leaders and community people, they say how important it is to Utah's Indian children. State agencies that serve children need to know how the law works."

Tsosie's dad is a Navajo from New Mexico and her mom is a Kiowa Cheyenne from Oklahoma. Both attended boarding schools and know what it was like to lose their sense of belonging.

"A child needs to know they are Indian, be proud of it, live their culture and have a strong sense of identity, family and traditions," Tsosie said.

When Indian children are being adopted, the law sets a priority order for where they should go: extended family, other members of their tribe or other Indian families.



Savania Tsosie

Foster care placements require sending the child to the least restrictive setting which most approximates a family and in which his special needs can be met. Preference is given to placing the child with his extended

family, a tribal approved foster home, a licensed Indian foster home approved by a non-Indian licensing authority or an institution approved or operated by an Indian tribe or organization.

"People who removed children thought they were doing a good thing. They wanted to get them away from poverty and into good, clean homes," Tsosie said. "But they were taking them away from the Indian way of life. They used their standards to determine what was a good home, a safe home, a clean home. By doing so they broke up families and destroyed a way of life."

"If you are pulled away from your mom and dad and put into a different environment you are totally lost," she continued. "It is hard to make sense of what happened to me and why."

A powwow was performed recently at a conference for children who returned to their tribes after being adopted. Special songs were sung to honor them for finding their way back.

"One young lady said that for a long time she couldn't identify with either her Indian side or her white side," Tsosie said. "She was lost and turned to alcohol. Many people turn to alcohol or drugs because they just can't cope with not knowing who they are."

Tsosie may be reached at (801) 538-4146 or on email at stosie@utah.gov.



DCFS Deputy Director Patti VanWagoner

Patti's Mantra: Respect And Trust Your Workers

**By Carol Sisco
DHS Public Information**

Patti VanWagoner liked her old job as a Child and Family Services community service manager just fine.

"I felt I'd found my niche working with the community and the agency and building connections," she said. "In building relationships it's important that we listen to people and have an understanding of their perception of what we do in child welfare."

Then Richard Anderson asked her if she wanted to serve as his deputy director for one year by using career mobility.

"It scares me to death," VanWagoner said. "The word deputy is incongruent with how I see myself. But Richard offered me an opportunity to work on projects I believe in, asking me to be a part of mentoring in the practice model."

VanWagoner believes caseworkers have the most important jobs in DCFS and that they need support.

"I hope we can make a difference in getting people to believe that all of us in child and family services work together as a team," she said. "So far I'm really enjoying it. It's an opportunity to build relationships with specialists at the state office. And Richard has built an atmosphere that really is a team. It's an open

atmosphere where we can ask questions and learn from one another."

VanWagoner thinks it is important for workers to know the administration supports them. State staff also must create a team environment that helps workers feel supported.

"We talk about how we can work with families and the community to help them by engaging them in a relationship that has respect and trust. It's the same with our employees. We need to show them respect and let them know they are valued," she said.

Barriers start disappearing once you find people who have similar philosophies about working with children, VanWagoner said. Caseworkers used to be responsible for absolutely everything, but now they work in teams who share the responsibility. "It's the same for families. They need that training to know they don't have to accomplish everything alone."

A Smithfield native, VanWagoner has been with DCFS 14 years. She has a bachelor's degree in family and human development from Utah State University, a master's in social work from the University of Utah and is a licensed clinical social worker.

Tess...

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player who is willing to pitch in and help the team. And he willingly gets people to follow him, his ideas, his orders and requests by using persuasive, convincing examples.

Training is a priority for Glenn. He makes sure his staff receives it and he sets the example by attending training himself. He also never lets a problem keep. Instead, he attacks it head on. First, he asks what happened, why it occurred and then talks about how we can solve it. Glenn doesn't care who gets the credit. He just wants to solve problems.

And here's something all of us should do. Glenn believes that anyone who deals with his team is a customer and he works to treat each one well.

We can all learn from the fine examples set by Tess, Mary Lou and Glenn. Please take a minute to thank them as I have.

New Residents at Split Mountain



‘Wally,’ left, and a lamb are new residents at Split Mountain Youth Center in Vernal

Service, Team Building Are Goals in Aging

By Elizabeth Sollis, Aging

You hear the word “team” a lot as you walk by the Division of Aging and Adult Services. And it isn’t just a word anymore; it’s an acronym: Together Enhancing Agency Methods.

TEAM is the division slogan chosen by a committee working to improve division morale and communication. Committee members include Mary Jane Ciccarello, Margaret Jones, Chad McNiven and Elizabeth Sollis.

Employees provide services to elder and disabled adults in the Salt Lake area as part of their team-building efforts. Called “Seasonal Blasts,” activities give workers a chance to interact directly with people who need help.

The first blast last fall was the Fall Leaf Haul done in conjunction with LifeCare. Employees arrived equipped with rakes, blowers, gloves, garbage bags and, most importantly, a passion and commitment to provide service.

Working as a team, staff raked leaves at the homes of four elder adults for approximately

three hours. Upon completion, everyone talked about how rewarding it was to provide direct service to those in need and how much they would like to perform similar services in the future.

The next team-building event was in December when employees donated food to the Utah Food Bank instead of holding a holiday party or exchanging gifts with each other. Team members agreed that bringing in food for those in need was far more beneficial and rewarding than exchanging gifts with each other.

The next seasonal blast happened at Utah Food Bank. Aging is planning other service projects to not only assist elder and disabled adults, but also help to “enhance agency methods together.” After all, as a division of the Department of Human Services, service is our business and most, if not all, our clients’ needs are met when we work together as a team.



Licensing Director Ken Stettler

New Licensing Director Focuses on Customers

Ken Stettler is the new Office of Licensing Director. A 25-year Department of Human Services employee, Stettler formerly worked in the Division of Youth Corrections.

"I want to make the focus of the office more customer friendly, both for the public and the providers we license," Stettler said.

Stettler has been involved in licensing issues for many years, first in Youth Corrections and later when the Office of Licensing was created.

"My primary interest in licensing came from the years I spent there where I realized the importance the office has in protecting all Human Services clients," Stettler said. "A lot of children come to Utah for treatment from other states and sometimes our office is the only agency regulating those providers."

Stettler worked on the initial licensing of Utah youth wilderness programs and was responsible for licensing all youth programs statewide from 1990 until 1995.

"Utah was the first state to license the type of wilderness programs that operate here," Stettler said. "We set a precedent and example for other states to follow."

"If we don't regulate those programs, there are some unscrupulous individuals who will put together anything that benefits them financially. They sometimes don't care how they treat kids," he continued. "We can't let that happen."

Stettler also helped other states as they began to regulate the outdoor programs. He advised Idaho, Oregon, Nevada, North Dakota, Arizona and Hawaii.

Stettler has a master's degree in management and youth leadership and a bachelor's degree in therapeutic recreation, both from Brigham Young University.

He replaced Reta Oram who retired in April.

Use Technology Wisely

**By Sandra Kaszowski
Information Technology**

Just a reminder that we all need to use email appropriately. Recent activity indicates that some people might not fully understand department policy on acceptable use of information technology resources.

Please don't send junk mail including chain letters, advertisements and solicitations. Excerpts from the Department of Human Services Acceptable Use Policy of IT Resources follow.

The purpose of the policy is to ensure that information technology resources owned or operated by the State of Utah or Utah Department of Human Services are used efficiently and appropriately.

Human Services policy says: It is the policy of the Utah Department of Human Services (the "Department") that IT Resources are valuable government resources that must be used efficiently and appropriately to carry out the business of the State of Utah (the "State") and the Department. The Department will monitor and enforce this policy to ensure that its employees and other users do not use IT Resources for impermissible personal uses or for any other uses that violate this policy.

Celebrating 100 Years With Work, Good Food & Cognac



Jim Thalman of the Deseret News interviews Bee Fisher, 108, at the Centenarians party

**By Carol Sisco
DHS Public Information**

Ebrahim Sakhai, 102, initially didn't have much to say as Utah's centenarians gathered May 29 to be honored by the governor. But once his son made a quick return home for Mr. Sakhai's hearing aid, he perked right up.

A retired accountant, he came to the United States from Iran 20 years ago and passed his citizenship test at 97. He worked at his grandson's store until three years ago. He loves to work and still volunteers wherever he can. Other days he bakes cookies or rolls out pizza dough with his daughter-in-law, Nicole.

His secrets for a good life? Work hard, eat well, sleep and sip a little cognac or brandy.

Utah has at least 118 residents who have reached the age of 100. And 28 of them made it to the annual party at the Governor's Mansion.

Bee Fisher, 108, is a little quieter but quick with her beautiful smile, and suggests people should "live one day at a time." She spent the day prior to the party at the beauty shop in Clearfield getting her hair done and having her fingernails painted.



Cyrus Sakhai, left, listens as his dad, Ebrahim, is interviewed by Tom Jordan of Metro News

Others say to avoid alcohol and cigarettes.

Burt Rogers, 100, has a slightly different take on things. He dances. Rogers, St. George, heads to the dance hall every Tuesday night.

"I only rest for about two dances," he said. "The ladies won't let me sit down."



Gov. Mike Leavitt and First Lady Jacalyn S. Leavitt visit with one of Utah's Centenarians

Terry Twitchell Honored as Trainer of the Year

The Utah State Training Consortium named Terry Twitchell, a 17-year Human Services employee, Utah Trainer of the Year. Nine people from five agencies were nominated.

“Human Services, as the largest department with so many divisions and offices, provides great challenges and diversity,” Twitchell said. “I love the people and the exchanges between trainer and participants. You know immediately whether you are connecting with your audience.”

Twitchell was the State Training Consortium’s first president and has been a Human Services trainer for six years. She was the department’s public
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Human Resources Director John Mathews, left, with Terry Twitchell as she is named Utah Trainer of the Year

Be Sure Your Morning Commute Is A Healthy One

By Healthy Utah

For busy morning commuters, fitting a decent breakfast into the schedule can be tough. And while driving and eating is a recipe for fender-benders, many people either have to do it or go hungry. So, if your empty passenger seat subs for a breakfast table, try these rules for a healthy breakfast on the road.

1. Pass up the drive-through. While it’s convenient to stop at a fast-food restaurant, these meals don’t score high for health and nutrition. An egg, cheese and bacon biscuit, for example, derives 59 percent of its 477 calories from fat.

2. Bring along your breakfast from home. This lets you to control the fat and calorie content of your most important meal of the day.

3. Store healthy nonperishables, such as breakfast bars and packages of dried fruit, in your car so they’re available on those mornings you must hit the ground running.

4. Avoid fat- and calorie-laden foods that are easy to grab, such as doughnuts, toaster pastries and bagels.

5. If you left the house without breakfast and have to stop at a mini-mart, instead of a doughnut and coffee, munch a banana and some yogurt.

6. Get a mini-cooler or cooler lunch bag so you can have healthy perishables in the car—especially on long commutes.

—Adapted from *Intelihealth.com*



**DHS Webmaster Rich Rayl accepts the
“Golden Egg Award” from Gov. Mike Leavitt**

DHS Creates Most User-Friendly Web Site

Human Services was honored for creating the most user-friendly Web site in state government at the annual Chief Information Officer’s Awards program in May.

The “Preacher Bob User Interface Golden Egg Award” was presented by Gov. Mike Leavitt during a program at the Gateway Theater.

Recipients included webmaster Rich Rayl, public information officer Carol Sisco, support technology manager Dennis Allred and web developer Vijaya Achan.

Twitchell Honored . . .

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information officer for 12 years and worked in public relations before that.

“I believe you need to give people a better reason for working than just money,” Twitchell said. “If you don’t offer training, growth and something to reach for, you starve their souls. The effort to understand one another and to learn additional skills not only makes the workplace friendlier but it increases an

employee’s options and makes them more valuable to the organization.”

Twitchell provides new employee orientation and the DHS supervisory training series. She also teaches conflict resolution, diversity, customer service and gender training.

Snuff Out Burnout

If you feel you’re on the verge of stressing too much because of work, take a step back. You might be burning out. Here’s what to do:

1. Find time to play

Even if it means forcing yourself. People on the verge of burnout usually spend less time with family and friends.

2. Get physical

You need to work physical activities into your day.

3. Set realistic objectives

Much stress stems from feeling overwhelmed. If you’re feeling snowed under at work, sit down with a boss and prioritize projects.

4. Use your support network

Everyone needs people to turn to for support, encouragement and candid feedback.

5. Keep your options open within the company

6. Leave if you have to

Much stress comes from worrying about problems at work and potential job loss. If there really is no sign a situation will change, leave.

If you need more information, contact Healthy Utah at (801) 538-6261 or toll free at (888) 222-2542.

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Robin Arnold-Williams

Executive Director

Edited by Carol Sisco, 120 N. 200 West, #319, Salt Lake City, Utah 84103.

Articles or ideas welcome. Send e-mail, FAX (801) 538-4016 or call (801) 538-3991. E-mail: csisco@utah.gov.